



Profiles in Wellness



Esther Koch **California**

How I Became an Athlete at the Age of 50

It started with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Team in Training (TNT) endurance event fund raising program. TNT was a great way to honor my mother who has leukemia, make a contribution to a worthy cause, and get in shape.

I completed my first 100-mile bicycle ride with TNT in 2001. I then challenged myself to complete a total of five 100-mile bicycle rides with TNT within the year of my 50th birthday. Those centuries were along the Eastern Seacoast, around Lake Tahoe, and in Las Vegas, Solvang, and Santa Fe. Then I decided to tackle California's most difficult bicycle ride, "The Death Ride", which for me was four mountain passes totaling 12,000 cumulative feet of elevation climb over 90 miles. The final birthday event with TNT was the Pacific Grove Olympic Triathlon.

I continue to make exercise a priority. This year, I hiked the Grand Canyon and took up dancing, which by the way, is a great combination of exercise, learning and coordination skills, plus social interaction as one ages. Bicycling, walking and dancing, plus two granddaughters and lots of friends, are my prescription for youthful, happy, healthy aging.